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SUBJECT: MOST POLITICAL PARTIES CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS BY THE END OF JUNE

¶11. (U) SUMMARY. Most of Guinea's major political parties are pushing to hold legislative elections by the end of June.

Sidya Toure's UFR party appears to be the main exception, arguing for presidential elections within the next twelve months. Other than the actual timeframe, however, the opposition political parties seem to be agreed on other points, including that the transition period not exceed twelve months, that the government establish a National Transition Council, the need for a specialized court to address constitutional and electoral issues, and that key transition government officials be barred from running for office. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) Guinea's major political parties released two declarations the week of January 5 outlining their respective positions as to how elections should be organized, as well as defining certain expectations of the Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD). Most parties signed the first declaration, which calls for the legislative election in six months and the presidential election in twelve months. Signatories included the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG - Alpha Conde), the Union of Guinean Democratic Forces (UFDG - Cellou Diallo), the Union for Progress and Renewal (UPR - Ousmane Bah), and the Union for Guinean Progress (UPG - Jean Marie Dore).

¶13. (U) The second declaration was published by the Union of Republican Forces (UFR - Sidya Toure) and a number of minority party allies. The text of the second declaration is almost exactly the same as that of the first declaration, with the exception of the section that addresses the electoral calendar. The UFR argues that the presidential election should take place before the legislative election.

¶14. (U) Within the text of the UFR's declaration, the signatories state that Guinea has a tradition of presidential leadership, which makes it critically important to quickly restore the authority of the executive position. They note that legislative elections will not end the transition period if the CNDD continues to assume the executive role, and that such a situation would not bring an end to international sanctions. They further argue that all other nations in the sub-region that have undergone a transition period following a coup d'etat have pursued presidential elections first. According to the UFR and its allies, this occurred in Mali and Niger, but not in Mauritania because "the absence of a qualified majority fragilized the Presidency." (COMMENT. According to a Malian TCN employee, Mali organized local and legislative elections before the presidential elections in 1992 in order to ensure that the executive could not influence election results. END COMMENT).

¶15. (SBU) The UFR Secretary General told Pol LES that the UFR decided not to sign the first declaration because the party "did not want to see the Mauritanian scenario repeat itself

in Guinea." He added that the presidential elections need to take place before the legislative elections in order "to avoid friction between the National Assembly and the President." Contact argued that if the legislative elections take place first, the elected Assembly would have a difficult time working with an executive that does not have a popular mandate. (COMMENT. This position assumes that the CNDD would remain in place as the executive body. END COMMENT).

16. (U) On all other major points, the declarations are essentially the same, suggesting a general consensus of opinion among the political parties. They demand that the transition period not exceed twelve months. The parties call for the creation of a National Transition Council, which would be responsible for instituting "reforms indispensable to the transition process, and to control government action." They specify that the Council would consist of 75 members - 35 representatives from political parties, 25 representatives from civil society, and 15 representatives from security forces.

17. (U) The parties demand that the government complete the electoral registration process by the end of March 2009. They specify that the President of the Republic, the President of the CNDD, the Prime Minister, and the President of the National Transition Council cannot put themselves forth as candidates in the elections. Any other member of government interested in running for office would need to resign from their current position at least three months before the election. The parties call for the creation of a special court to address constitutional and electoral issues. Finally, they call for the establishment of an international

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team composed of representatives from ECOWAS, the African Union, and the United Nations to observe the electoral process.

COMMENT

18. (SBU) The fact that the declarations are similar indicates that the opposition political parties are working together to advance the electoral agenda. The late President Conte's Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) did not sign either declaration. Most of the parties seem to share the USG position that legislative elections need to be organized within the next six months. Poloff plans to meet with Sidya Toure soon to reinforce this message as it is critical that all of the major parties are pushing for the same agenda with the CNDD. Failure to do so may provide the CNDD and other actors with an opportunity to manipulate the situation in their favor. Although some USG partners (including IFES and the UNDP) are suggesting that technical issues may push the elections further down the road (septel), most of the political parties continue to demand a six month timeframe.

END COMMENT.

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